



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL

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Councilmember Opel Jones Files Legislation to Require a Public Fiscal Analysis Statement for Council Bills

Ellicott City, MD (February 3, 2020)- Today, County Councilmember Opel Jones will introduce legislation to provide a fiscal analysis to be available to the public. If passed, any future county bills will become more transparent with respect to fiscal impacts of county departments. Council Bill 8-2020 will be co-sponsored by Councilmembers Christiana Rigby and David Yungmann.

Currently, fiscal analyses are conducted by the Office of the County Auditor but are not required to be made available to the public. Council Bill 8-2020 addresses the fiscal impacts of each council bill and provides a bill summary. Similar fiscal analyses are used in the Maryland General Assembly for legislators, and through the Maryland Legislative Information System for the public.

“Adding a public fiscal analysis to the legislative process gives residents an opportunity to review the fiscal impacts of a county bill prior to giving testimony at the legislative public hearing,” said Councilmember Jones. “Public fiscal analyses assist residents to easily track and evaluate proposed county bills that affect their daily lives.”

This bill ushers an additional level of fiscal clarity of the costs and benefits of county bills. “Over the last year, this Council has considered several pieces of legislation that have significant effects on County revenue and operations,” said Councilwoman Rigby. “As elected officials, we should always strive toward greater transparency and accountability as we legislate. This bill provides the public with important information on the fiscal effects of County legislation, and I hope that it will strengthen community engagement in the legislative process.”

Council Bill 8-2020 will require the Office of the County Auditor to submit fiscal analyses two business days before a legislative public hearing. Subsequently, the County Council will release the fiscal analyses for each county bill at least one day before the legislative public hearing. “The public should see the fiscal impact of legislation and understand that we need to balance policy and fiscal considerations,” said Councilmember Yungmann.

The proposed legislation was pre-filed on January 23, 2020 and will be introduced at the legislative session on Monday, February 3, 2020. Testimony will be accepted at the legislative public hearing on Tuesday, February 18, 2020. Howard County residents can sign up to testify by visiting <https://apps.howardcountymd.gov/otestimony/>. If you would like to submit your testimony electronically, please email councilmail@howardcountymd.gov.